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23 with non-political
29 compared with Pietism + mysticism

EPISCOPAL ADDRESS

TO THE

ALL-EUROPEAN METHODIST CONFERENCE

AUGUST 2-6, 1939, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

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To the members of the All-European Methodist Conference.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The first letter, which St. Paul wrote to European Christians, the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, begins with this salutation: «Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ». These words of greeting are followed immediately by an expression of gratitude to God for their Christian conduct: «We give thanks to God always for you», the Apostle writes, «remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ». Their witness to the Christian way of life is made possible because «our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost», and thereby those Christians in Thessalonica became «ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia, for from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith is spread abroad».

With these words, addressed originally to the first Christians of Europe, the Bishops of the Methodist Church in Europe salute you, the Methodists of Europe, who are assembled here as witnesses of the same power of the Gospel of Christ in our own day. You have come to this All European Methodist Conference as the representatives of the Methodist Church, which is working to-day in twentyone European countries, preaching the Gospel in eighteen different languages. In every one of these countries thousands of men, women and children have been led to believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour by listening to the proclamation, in their own language, of the good news. They have experienced in their lives the power of

the Holy Spirit, lifting them out of the servitude of sin into the glorious liberty of children of God by forgiving their sins, recreating them in the likeness of the Master in like manner as those Macedonians of old to whom St. Paul addressed his letter. And may it not likewise be said of the Methodists in Europe that they have become an example to the Methodists of the whole world? Where this is not yet evident, our prayer is that it may be attained. At any rate the European Methodists are such who, in the language of the General Rules of the Methodist Church «have the form and are seeking the power of Godliness».

THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONFERENCE.

This is the first time that it is possible to hold an All European Methodist Conference for the simple reason, that not before this year there has been an All European Methodist Church. The two European Methodist Conferences that were held in previous years brought together representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They met before the world war, that is before the Methodist Episcopal Church, South began work in Europe. In the last two decades there were the two branches of American Methodism represented in Europe, but there was hardly any contact between the two hosts. There was no rivalry between them, since they did not labor in the same countries, but they were not acquainted with each other. They were marching and fighting against sin as separate armies under their own leaders and their own forms of administration. Now having become united in one Church, being no longer a Northern and a Southern Church — distinctions which had no meaning whatever for the Europeans — it was the

opportune time to plan for a Uniting Conference in Europe, so as to celebrate in a fitting way the accomplished union. This Conference is to be a getting acquainted meeting, where personal contacts are established, where we become acquainted with the work of our Church in the different countries, where we may learn one from the other, where our eyes are more opened to behold the really great and marvellous work that God is doing in Europe through the instrumentality of our Church. The function of this Conference is not administrative or legislative, but informative and inspirational, so as to lead us to a clearer perception and a higher appreciation of our privilege as Methodists, to a profounder conception of our high and holy mission in Europe, and inspire us to increased devotion to the great Head of the Church, whose body we form as lively, useful members, commissioned to be co-workers with Him in the salvation of the world. The vision of the possibilities for the advancement of the Kingdom by a united Methodism created a compelling and contagious urge in the hearts especially of the missionary leaders of the Methodist Church, Drs. Ralph E. Diffendorfer, Willard G. Cram and L. P. Wasson, and to their initiative and success in providing for the required financial means we owe in a large way the privilege of meeting here. Our thanks are due to them as well as to all those who by their cheerful, unremitting services have contributed to the realization of the Conference idea.

WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE REPRESENT?

This is to be a getting acquainted meeting. Hence we may be allowed to briefly answer the questions: Who are we? Where do we come from? What do we repre-

sent? We are a cross section of European Methodism, ministers and laymen, men and women, old and young. All of us engaged in some particular branch of service in the Church. Among the ministers are Bishops, District Superintendents, Pastors, Editors, Professors, Superintendents of Homes, Hospitals, Deaconess organizations, Publishing Houses, leaders of Young People's organizations. Among the laymen and women we have those engaged in business, in various professions, Doctors, Lawyers, Teachers, Deaconesses, Superintendents of charitable institutions, house wives, and in reference to their service in the Church: Local Preachers, Class Leaders, Sunday School Superintendents, Sunday School Teachers, Epworth League Presidents, Trustees and Stewards of Local Churches and Institutions, Leaders of Temperance Societies. There is hardly any branch of our Church activities that is not represented. Where do we come from? We are representatives of the Methodist Church from the Northernmost city of Norway, Hammerfest, to the Southern shore of Sicily in Italy. And between Italy in the South and Norway in the North we have organized work in Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden. Branching off to the West there is Belgium, France, even Spain and towards the East we point to Hungary, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, The Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia, Slovakia, Poland, Latvia, Esthonia, Lithuania, Finland and Russia. And beyond the borders of Europe proper we include in our ecclesiastical administration also North Africa and far away Madeira.

This is not the place to give detailed statistical tables in answer to the question what we represent. Suffice it to point out that European Methodism to-day has an army of nearly 800 preachers, members of Conference and about 2000 Local preachers. Besides 1600 Deaconesses who are with few exceptions trained nurses, there are about 5000 other lay hel-

pers as exhorters, class leaders, Sunday School teachers. The total number of European Methodists is approximately 112,000, who meet for worship in 910 churches and chapels. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached in more than 2000 preaching places. The number of our Sunday School scholars is about 80,000 and the number of young people in our Young People's organizations is not much lower. The value of our Churches and Parsonages is estimated at eight and a half million dollars. Counting the Methodist Schools, Publishing Houses, Hospitals, Orphan Homes, Old People's Homes, Rest Homes, Hostels, the total value of Methodist properties exeeds forty million dollars. Not all these properties are free of debt. However the incumbrance is nowhere a serious embarrassment. Satisfactory progress is being made in lifting the indebtedness.

The European Methodists take their part in carrying on the world missionary task of the church. Missionary interest and missionary giving are remarkable. Special magazines in the interest of foreign missions are being published. The older fields led by Sweden, Norway and Switzerland support wholly or in connection with the Parents Boards about 40 nationals in fields outside of Europe.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE METHODIST CHURCH AND CONTRIBUTIONS VOLUNTARY.

Compared with the millions of Protestants in the various countries these 112,000 Methodists do not represent an overwhelmingly large number. In fact judged by mere numbers they are in most countries a rather insignificant portion of the Protestant population. But they are handpicked. They are Methodists not in consequence

of any decree of civil law. Even where we now are dealing with the second and third generations, the children do not become Methodists automatically and are listed as such in the civil courts. These Methodists are members of the Methodist Church because each one has decided to join the Methodist Church by his own free will. They are Methodists because they want to be such. In each case membership in the Methodist Church is the result of personal self-determination; and they remain Methodists only as long as they choose to do so and fulfill the duties of membership. The growth of the Methodist Church is not due to natural birth rate, but to spiritual re-birth. It is not the outcome of legal compulsion, but of self-determination by each individual. The fact that so many thousands of souls are now members of the Methodist Church in Europe is the more marvellous because in most of the countries membership in the Methodist Church does not involve any social or legal advantages, but on the contrary the Methodists are still more or less discriminated against. In addition to the regular members, there are large numbers of «adherents», that is to say, followers who without formally joining the Church, attend Methodist services more or less regularly, in whose homes Methodist ministers are welcome to make pastoral visitations, who call upon our ministers for spiritual ministrations in case of sickness or sorrow In comparing the numbers of Methodists with the figures given in European statistics as «Protestants» we must not overlook the fact, that in these figures all citizens and their children are included, who are not Catholics or Jews or have legally separated from the State Church. In most countries the Methodists are included in the official counts as Protestants.

Moreover, membership in the Methodist Church does not carry with it any financial advantages but involves heavy sacrifices. The amounts needed for the sup-

port of the work come neither from State appropriations, nor are they, except in some of the newer fields, gifts from America. They are contributed by the European Methodists themselves and represent sacrificial giving under the compulsion not of any tax laws, but of hearts strangely warmed and constrained by the love of Christ, and the passion to save souls and to do good. Considering the economic conditions under which the vast majority of our European members are working and living, the amount contributed for the work of their Church in its various departments, is really astonishing. Let me say again: We point to these facts not in the spirit of self-adulation, but with deep gratitude to the giver of every good and perfect gift.

The statistical summaries given above represent merely the direct results of Methodist work in Europe as far as it may be expressed by figures. Marvellous as they are they do not tell the whole story. There are indirect results, the influence of which on the religious, moral, social even intellectual life of the European nations are beyond any statistical enumeration. We have much reason to praise the Lord for what He has done for Europe through the instrumentality of the Methodist Church.

A RELIGIOUS EPIC.

The story of Methodism is one of the most fascinating religious epics. It has been so in England, it has been so in America. It is so in Europe. It is the epic of the divine urge and the human response. God has offered opportunities for service, man has been alert to perceive them. God has opened doors, man has been willing to enter. God has called to sacrificial duties, man has

obeyed the Divine summons. God has promised power from above to overcome apparently insurmountable obstacles, man has by faith stretched out his feeble hands and grasped the all-powerful hand of the Almigthy. God's power working in and through His faithful children has written an epic that may well be compared to any chapter in the annals of Christianity for its heroism, its daring, its abandonment, its contagious joy, its compelling love to God and man.

Moreover, while we gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance rendered by the Church in America, especially in the beginning of the work and, in a magnificent way, in the years of reconstruction after the devastating world war, yet the great bulk of the millions of dollars invested in houses of worship, Church buildings, Parsonages, Hospitals, Homes, Publishing Houses does not come from sources in America, but represents the sacrificial giving of the European membership. This holds good especially in the older fields as Scandinavia, Germany and Switzerland. Without the generous gifts of some benefactors in America, whom God has blessed with large means, and without the continued liberality of the Church Boards in America, European Methodism could not have taken root and expanded as it did, but without the whole-hearted and really marvellous sacrifices which the European Methodists have made, Methodism in Europe would be of the nature of a foreign colony, not of an indigenous Church. Now it is a part of the life of the nations, nourished by the life blood of the people.

EUROPEAN METHODISM NOT IMPORTED.

This statement leads me to the next observation, which needs to be stressed especially in view of misunderstanding and unfriendly criticism. European Methodism, while fostered by America, is not an American importation, not more so than American Lutheranism is a German or Scandinavian importation. Historically speaking, European Methodism is the reflex of European immigration to America and, in a less degree, to England. It was not denominational ambition on the part of Methodists in America that urged them to enlarge the sphere of their church influence by establishing missions in Europe and proselytizing the Europeans. It was the cry raised in Europe «come over and help us» that reached the ears of Americans, touched their consciences, and prompted them to heed the call.

THE BEGINNINGS OF SCANDINAVIAN METHODISM.

This All European Methodist Conference meets in the city of Copenhagen. How and when did Methodism originate in this great city? Nearly a hundred years ago a young Dane, Christian Willerup, emigrated to America, was converted to God in a Methodist meeting, prepared for the ministry and was appointed Home Missionary and Pastor among his fellow immigrants. He organized the first Norvegian Methodist Church. When returned immigrants had commenced to preach the Gospel of exprimental religion in several places in Sweden and Norway, Willerup was sent by the Mission Board to Norway to guide and unify those sporadic efforts as Superintendent of the work in the Scandinavian countries. After a while he transferred his headquarters to Copen-

hagen, where he held the first Methodist service in August 1858 and organized the first Society in January 1859. There he became acquainted with another Methodist countryman, Boin Smith, who had likewise found Christ in America and had returned to his home country on account of failing health. Smith had started selling Bibles and Christian literature and was appointed colporteur by the Mission Board. Willerup assisted by Smith held services in a rented hall, which soon proved too small to offer even standing room for the eager listeners. An appeal was made to the Danes in America for funds to build a church. Among the contributors was the Danish Consul in New York, who pledged a liberal amount. The Mission Society appropriated the balance required to erect a modest chapel, the «Bethel Methodist Church» in Copenhagen. This instance is typical of the manner in which Methodism started in most of the European countries.

Beginning with the middle of the 19th century the stream of European emigration to America increased with every decade. From 1850 to 1876 nearly 200,000 immigrants from Norway, Sweden and Denmark landed in New York. Among them were many sailors. They were exposed to all sorts of dangers in the strange land, the language and the laws of which they did not understand. Port Missions were organized to meet their spiritual and temporal needs. Among these immigrant sailors was a young Swede, Olaf Hedström, who married a Methodist girl, and who was soundly converted and felt the call to do something for his countrymen. The Methodist Missionary Society placed a ship at his disposal, the «Bethel Ship» and for thirty years O. Hedström labored as port missionary, and in that period the Bethel Ship became the place where thousands of Scandinavian immigrants received lasting impressions of spiritual religion, and many came to an experimental knowledge of the Gospel of Christ. They

wrote of their spiritual experience to their relatives in the homeland. Many returned for a visit and thus knowledge of the Methodist Church was spread, societies were founded and in course of time churches organized. The call for this type of heart-warming preaching increased and in order to meet the demand, the Missionary Society appointed some of these converted brethren as missionaries. It may not be superfluous to point out that the term «missionary» is, in the English language, not limited in its meaning to preacher of the Gospel sent out to pagan countries as it is the case with the corresponding word in the continental languages, but has a much wider scope.

HOW METHODISM BEGAN IN GERMANY.

Methodist work in Germany and Switzerland began in a similar way. A young German, a butcher by trade, emigrated in 1810 from the little town of Winnenden in Wuerttemberg to London. It was this plain, unlettered young German, who laid the foundation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Germany. While passing a Methodist Church in that large city of London, where he was a perfect stranger, he was attracted by the singing, attended the services, and was converted under Methodist preaching. After a while he felt the urge to visit his home country in order to tell his people of the peace and joy he had found. Souls were converted, through his testimony a letter was sent by them to the Wesleyan Missionary Committee in London, asking that Brother Mueller be sent to them as «missionary». The Committee saw in this request a call of God and early in 1831 Mueller was sent to Germany.

Of intriguing interest is likewise the epic of German

Methodism in America, as well as in Europe. In the course of his travels Bishop Asbury found large German settlements in Pennsylvania. His travelling companion, Henry Böhm, a German, frequently followed the Bishop's sermon with an exhortation in German. However Asbury was of opinion that the German language would speedily be supplanted by the English. Hence nearly a century elapsed before the Methodists became aware of the opportunity and obligation to proclaim the Gospel to the increasing number of German immigrants, and appointed William Nast, a graduate from the University of Tuebingen in Germany, who had emigrated to America and had been gloriously converted at a camp-meeting in Ohio, to begin a mission among his countrymen. Like those Scandinavian converts, many Germans, who found Christ under the preaching of Nast, wrote letters to their home folks. In response to these accounts of assurance of salvation, requests were received to send preachers of this Gospel. These requests led to the sending back to Germany of another converted immigrant, Ludwig S. Jacoby, a converted Jew, who startet Methodist work in the fall of 1849 in Bremen. During the next few years some more German immigrants were sent back and these Germans laid the foundation of Methodism in the Fatherland.

THE SPREAD OF METHODISM IN EUROPE.

From the Scandinavian countries the Methodist message was brought by nationals to the neighbouring Finland, from Germany to Switzerland, Alsace, now part of France, to Austria, including at that time the present Hungary and Jugoslavia, to the Baltics and to Russia. It was the same principle of religious dynamics, the same compelling urge to bear testimony of personal ex-

perience, that constrained the first Christians to confess: «We cannot but speak of the things which we have seen and heard» (Acts 4, 2), which was also operative in the witness of the European Methodists and which led to the formation of Methodist groups and resultet in Methodist Churches. The story of Methodist beginnings in Bulgaria and Italy is different. Those were missionary enterprises in the more limited sense of the term. When the first Methodist missionaries were sent to Bulgaria in 1857, the country was under Turkish rule. The Methodists began the Bulgarian mission upon the request of the Congregational American Board, which had commenced work in the Southern part of the country and invited the Methodists to cultivate the Northern section. After the world war the Southwestern section of Bulgaria, where the Congregationalists had several Churches, was given to the newly established Kingdom of Jugoslavia. Political conditions made it impossible for a Bulgarian organization to minister in that territory. Since the Methodists had work in the Northern part of Jugoslavia, the Congregational Board requested us to take over those orphaned congregations in the South. Thus, those Churches in the part of Jugoslavia which was formerly known as Macedonia were added to our Jugoslavia Mission Conference. It is a special privilege and at the same time a challenge that our Church is the only Protestant Church, that has heeded the call heard by St. Paul in the early days of Christianity «Come over to Macedonia and help us». We have Churches within about seventy miles from Philippi, where St. Paul preached his first sermon on European soil and from Thessalonica, the Macedonian city, to which he addressed two of his letters. We have a Church about eighty miles from the old Biblical Berea. And we are happy to greet here at this first All European Methodist Congress Methodists, two brothers and a sister, from Biblical Macedonia.

Italy has always been in the minds of Protestants in other countries a field for evangelical efforts. However not until the end of the Papal State and the founding of the free Kingdom of Italy was religious liberty granted, and the possibility offered for evangelical preaching in the whole Kingdom. English and American Baptists and Methodists availed themselves of the opening and established missions. The English Wesleyan Committee had begun work as early as 1861 in Milan and Florence, which did not belong to the Papal State, but after 1871 their work was greatly extended. In the same year Dr. Leroy M. Vernon was sent by the American Methodist Missionary Society to begin a mission in Italy. Thus there are both branches of Methodism at work in the Kingdom of Italy, the English Wesleyans and the American Methodists. Both have now the identical legal name viz: The Methodist Church. Let us hope that before long a union of the two may be effected.

The story of Methodism in Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia, as it was called at that time, is different in origin. In those countries Methodist work was undertaken by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South as part of war relief efforts. The impelling motive was the desire to help in the work of reconstruction after the havoc wrought by the war, the crying physical poverty, the moral needs, the religious destitution. The relief work was begun not with the intent to proselytize, but to render help in building up what had been destroyed by the war. The humanitarian work carried on by the Church South with great sacrifices in men and means in the spirit of the helping and healing ministry of the Master had its source in an intense evangelistic urge and was accompanied by continuous evangelism. Souls were won for Christ, Churches were organized and the foundations were laid of a vigorous Methodism.

In view of the manner in which Methodism was

transplanted into the soil of continental Europe, has taken root and has grown, we may well say that the presence of the Methodist Church in the various countries of Europe is due not to denominational ambitions, but we can clearly see the providential leading of Him, who orders the ways of individuals as well as of churches and of nations. The greatest thing man can do is to catch the vision of His plans, ready and eager to be used by Him as co-worker with Him, even though the task may be altogether different from preconceived ideas or hallowed traditions.

THE DYNAMICS OF METHODISM IN CLASH WITH STATIC CHURCH FORMS.

There has always been in human life, especially in organized society, the clash between the static element and the dynamic, the tranquil flow in safe channels and the impetuous onrush of torrential floods, the old skins and the new wine. New movements in religious life, especially when driven by the contagious force of a new dynamic have always been denounced as dangerous innovations and have been fought against not only with spiritual weapons, but with very material tools, the State lending to the Church its machinery of oppression. This has been the case through the centuries of the history of Christian religion, beginning with the conflict between the fiery tongues of the Church of Pentecost and the legalism of the Synagogue, down through the evangelistic movements in the Roman Church; the new conception of Christian life found in the Gospel of salvation by faith as proclaimed in the Reformation period; the spiritual revival of Pietism; the warm heart of early Methodism, until our own time, when the Methodist Church in

Europe was stigmatized as being dangerous to Church and State and when police and courts of law were called upon to surpress the activities of the Methodists, those «sectarians», those «enemies of law and order».

I shall not enter into the details of this disgraceful story. To the honor of the European Methodists be it said, that they endured the false accusations and the indignities in the spirit of genuine Christian meekness and forbearance. A large number submitted to fines levied upon them by magistrates, and endured losses in their business. A goodly company went tc prison not in bitterness of spirit, but with joy that they were deemed worthy of suffering as their Master has suffered. Methodist children and young people were discriminated against and certain avenues of honorable service in the community were closed to them. But on the whole they remained faithful. They have written into the epic of Methodism a chapter that commands not only the respect but boundless admiration and profound gratitude.

In thus arraigning the treatment meted out by the continental Churches and Governments to the Methodists I wish to point out, in all fairness, that there have been conspicuous instances of a different attitude. There have been theologians and scholars of note who evinced a just appraisal of the meaning of Methodism and its standing in the Church universal. They tried to show their countrymen, that Methodism is not a vagary or a heresy, but is genuinely scriptural and evangelical, that Methodism has a mission in Europe in view of the wide spread rationalism in doctrine, the aridity of spiritual life, the laxity in morals and the increasing estrangement of the masses, especially the laboring classes from the Church. However they were as voices crying in the wilderness. Of the clergy as a whole it must be recorded as St. Paul did of the Jews of his days: «They had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge» (Rom. 10, 2).

Without at this time attempting to offer an explanation, I note in passing that on the whole the Lutherans showed more zeal in their rejection of Methodism than did the followers of Zwingli or Calvin; and churchmen who prided themselves on their strict orthodoxy denounced Methodism more bitterly than those who were more liberal in doctrinal views. More than once Methodist preachers were heard expressing perplexity and distress that Pastors who stood on the same foundation with regard to the essentials of the Christian faith should be less willing to recognize them as members of the same body of Christ and as fellow-soldiers in the same warfare against sin, the world, the flesh and the devil, than those, whose views about the divinity of Jesus Christ and his redemptive work by his death upon the cross they could not share.

ALLEGED DOCTRINAL ERRORS OF METHODISM.

The doctrines of Methodism were not the real cause of the antagonism manifested by the existing churches. The real cause was deeper than doctrinal differences. It is true, in the popular and the learned attacks upon Methodism, two doctrines which Methodism especially emphasized, were generally held up as proofs to show the unsoundness and enthusiasm of Methodism. They were the insistence upon conversion and the prominence given to sanctification. The very name «Methodism» was interpreted by the ignorant as well as by learned opponents as meaning a certain hard and fast method of the process of conversion. While the picture painted by the opponents was greatly distorted, we must admit, that in a number of instances the Methodists themselves lent color to it. As in England so on the European continent

men and women who had led a life of utter indifference to the claims of Christ were gripped by the evangelistic appeal. Their eyes were opened. They saw themselves as lost sinners, they repented of their sins, they turned to Christ as their Saviour, and by faith in the crucified one they became conscious of the remission of their sins. They experienced the peace and joy of souls snatched from perdition and made children of God, heirs of eternal salvation. Their conversion was instantaneous, a turning point, dividing their lives into two distinct parts: the life without Christ, sinful, dark and the life with Christ, sacred, luminous, in conscious fellowship with their Redeemer and Master. No wonder that many assumed that their individual experience was the pattern for everybody, that, as they could fix time and the circumstances of their conversion, so everybody else must be able to do so, if conversion was genuine. They made no allowance for the variety of Christian experience. They knew very little of child psychology and did not take account of the fact that the religious experience of their children trained from early childhood in the principles and privileges of the love and pardoning grace of Jesus Christ, the children's friend, might develop in a form different from their own, while as genuine and real as theirs. This problem became very real in the second and third generation of Methodists, when children were growing up in Methodist families, Sunday Schools, Young People's classes, who were never outside of the influences of careful, prayerful Christian teaching and life. The authoritative standards of Methodist doctrinal teaching, however, have never been uncertain or misleading on this point.

Another object of superficial, scurrilous attacks was the Methodist insistence upon the privilege of entire sanctification or Christian perfection. It is well known that Wesley was convinced that Methodism was called

by God to spread scriptural holiness over the lands. He held up to his followers the high ideal of mature manhood in Christ, of perfection in Christian love. Christian life was to him not a constantly recurring falling into open sin, not a weak, vain struggle against the overpowering mastery of sin, not a being sold under the lordship of sin; but a glorious deliverance; a struggle, yes, but not doomed to failure, but destined to victory by faith in Christ, who giveth the victory. Wesley did not give a definition of entire sanctification. He guarded it against erroneous claims, against enthusiastic extravagances, but he did not swerve from the highest ideal and from his implicit faith in the power of Jesus Christ to lead his followers to the highest attainments possible in a life fully surrendered to the Master.

Again we have to admit that not all Methodists have shown the same sanity or moderation in statement. They were sincere, but they were not always aware of the implications of the expressions they used. However the critics of Methodism overlook the surpassingly important fact that on the whole the Methodist emphasis upon Christian perfection has been, in the lives of millions of Methodists, representing all classes of society in all parts of the world, the most powerful mainspring and the compelling dynamics of their sincere endeavours to realize the Master's challenge and promises as stated in the Sermon on the Mount which He has summed up in the all inclusive words: «Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect» (Mt. 5, 48).

METHODISM STANDS FOR A FREE CHURCH.

However, the real reason for the opposition which Methodism has met in the Continental countries is not

on the plane of her Theology. It lies much deeper. It is the fact that organized Methodism represents a conception of the Church, which is distinct from and opposed to the conception of the Christian Church dominant in Europe throughout the centuries. Methodism stands for the principle of a free Church. Through all the centuries of their history the Churches in Europe have been closely connected with the State, have been an integral part of the State machinery, have been supported by the State, protected by the State, and controlled by the State. The Europeans have, for centuries, lived under a system of religious domination by the State. Religion was not voluntary, but was imposed upon by the State. In the centuries of absolutism, the type of religion was decided by the monarch according to the principle «cujus regio, ejus religio». Hence dissent in religious belief was looked upon as disloyalty to the State, and dissenters were dealt with accordingly. European history shows that the effort to maintain this assumed identity of Church and State has been one of the most prolific causes of persecution, suffering, bloodshed, terror, wars. It has been a real curse.

The Lutheran Reformation did not change this relation. Luther tied his Church indissolubly to the territorial governments and made implicit obedience to the princes the surpreme rule of Christian conduct. We are not unmindful of the claim that this was necessary at that time for the protection of the Reformation. Be that as it may. The subjugation of the Church to the State was based upon the idea of a Christian State. We now see that this is a fiction. The modern States are not Christian States, some are not only anti-Christian, but anti-religious, others are indifferent. But the subservience of the Church has been retained. If anything, the domination of the State over the Church has been strengthened, the State still or more so

than ever using the Church as a means to strengthen its authority. The fact that the State furnishes the financial means for the substistence of the Church, by levying and collecting the Church taxes makes the Church to all intents and purposes a department of the State and a tool of the government. True, during the last few decades a certain measure of self-government has been granted to the Church, but this does not alter its dependence upon the State in everything essential. Recent political and cultural developments in some European countries, particularly the totalitarian claims of several States have opened the eyes of many Churchman to the anomaly and the danger of this relation. Methodism has from the beginning stood for the principles of separation of Church and State. Methodism has always been willing to give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but it has insisted on giving to God what is God's. It has never been willing to eliminate Caesar and erect a church-ruled State, but it has been equally insistent not to eliminate God by surrendering the whole sphere of human activity to Caesar. The opposition to primitive Methodism was not purely on religious grounds. It was instinctively felt that Wesley's societies while in no wise political but merely religious, yet in their implication were in opposition to the established Church as a State institution. This suspicion was even stronger on the Continent because when Methodism entered the Continental field it was part of a highly organized ecclesiastical body. What Europe did not realize was the fact, that this ecclesiastical organization was in no wise connected with any government. The idea of a free Church, self-supporting, self-administering, altogether free from State control, hence without any hidden political purposes was altogether beyond the horizon of European political thinking.

PREJUDICES ON THE WANE.

In recent times the free Church idea has gained ground. There are a number of free Churches in Europe, besides the Methodists. They are no longer considered as a public danger. They are no longer persecuted. They are at least tolerated. However, venerable, age long institutions create an atmosphere which lingers long. They create habits of thought which cannot easily be altered. The static principle inherent in historic organizations is a tremendous subconscious power.

Even in countries which now give liberty to the Methodist and other Free Churches to pursue their spiritual and philanthropic ministrations there are still certain discriminations. Methodist children and young people are not in all countries on a par with State Church children and young people. In popular speech as well as in theological terminology there is still the distinction between «The Church», meaning the State Church, and «Free Church», the term implying some lesser grade. When the European uses the term «Church» he means exclusively the State Church. It is exceedingly difficult for a European Churchman to consider the Methodist Church as a real Church on an equality with his own, Lutheran or Reformed tax supported Church. Some who have been in America or have attended ecumenical Conferences are puzzled because they see that the Methodist Church is considered in America a real Church, quite on an equality with the Lutheran or any other Church, while they find it difficult to accord to the Methodist Church in their own country the same standing, not only on account of the small, at times almost negligable size of a local Methodist Church, but owing to the inherited conceptions of what constitutes a Church. These old prejudices have become part of the subconscious nature. They are not evidences of ill will. They are static tra-

ditions. The weight of centuries cannot easily be shaken off. It is but natural that a certain superiority complex keeps lingering. After a century of activity in continental Europe the Methodist Church has overcome to a great extent the opposition, at least in those countries where she has been at work the longest time. While in the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic countries legal impediments are still in existence and popular prejudice is against us, we gratefully record that in most Protestant countries the Methodists are no longer considered dangerous intruders. Our members enjoy the same legal protection as other citizens and in several countries in State Church circles the Methodist Church is being recognized as co-worker in the same great task. Far from assuming an attitude of superior piety and looking down upon other Churches the Methodists gratefully acknowledge the works of faith and labours of love accomplished by the established churches. They have been ready, ever since the days of Wesley, and they are so at the present time «to form a league defensive and offensive with every soldier of Jesus Christ.»

EFFECTS OF UNIFICATION IN EUROPE.

Turning now from the picture presented by the historical background of European Methodism to the present and the future, we ask in which way does the unification of Methodism affect the Methodist work in Europe.

American Methodism has entered upon a new epoch. The Methodist Church is now the strongest Protestant Church. She has unparalleled opportunities. A tremendous challenge faces her. The spirit prevailing at the Uniting Conference, the noble deliverances, the resolu-

tions and commitments have demonstrated that the new Church is fully aware of her duty. She has set up the machinery to enter upon increased usefulness. She is looking to the exalted head of the Curch to baptize her anew with the power from on high to fulfill her mission. How about the new Methodist Church in Europe? In a way we are not so much affected by unification, as far as the work in the various countries is concerned. The Church in each country will pursue its work in the usual way. No great administrative changes have to be carried out. Since there is no overlapping in any country, no merging of Conferences will be necessary. As a matter of fact even if we should desire to fuse by merging two or three Conferences, the existing lingual and national differences would be prohibitive. It will not even be possible to organize all the work in Europe in Central Conferences as the plan of union has provided. The Central Conference of Germany is the only one that is functioning. The Scandinavian Conferences are authorized to continue as a Central Conference, but as for the rest of Europe the best the Uniting Conference could do, was to set up what is called a Provisional Central Conference, which is really merely a name. It has no administrative or legislative functions. It is not even an episcopal area. The work in each country for the present at least will go on as though there had not been a Uniting Conference.

Yet, unification is of great significance for Europe. There is a powerful uplift and inspiration, a source of encouragement and strength, especially for our small congregations that are to some extent still smarting under a sort of inferiority complex, to know that they are part and parcel of the strongest Protestant Church in the world. Even the numerically weakest congregations, worshipping in poorly equipped little Church buildings, are not isolated. They are integrated in a world embracing

Church. The life blood of the whole Methodist Church flows into the most remote and poorest parts stimulating, enlivening, inspiring. The tremendous power of this connectional consciousness and its practical results are seen in our connectional literature, our Church polity, our institutions, our connectional Boards. It is of inestimable value. Separated from this connection Methodism in the various countries would be in danger of loosing its world vision, of becoming narrow, stagnant, atrophied. Unification should send through the length and breadth of our European Church a new consciousness of the value of our connectional unity and a corresponding new vision of our mission.

METHODISM'S MISSION TO-DAY.

Our Mission! Whatever else the new Methodist Church may have in store for us in Europe, it should place with increased insistence and vigor before our minds and into our hearts the question of our Mission! This question confronts the Church in all parts of the world. In the United States, as well as in China and India, in Africa and South America, but perhaps especially in Europe, even more so than in the homeland of Methodism and in the pagan fields. It would be trite to say that we are living in a new world. For centuries the term «the new world» applied to America. To-day the new world is not across the Atlantic. It is right here. We are living in it. The last quarter of a century has witnessed more and vastly profounder changes in Europe than in America or in any other part of the world. The world war and the succeeding revolutions have changed the map of Europe. Not only the political and national

boundary lines, not only systems of government and the structure of society, but they have completely revolutionized the moral and religious beliefs and practices of former centuries. The modern European is living in an atmosphere totally different from that in which his parents were nurtured and which moulded their views, their beliefs, their characters. What has Methodism to say to this generation? Has it a message for the European men and women, the youths of our day, uprooted as they are, cynical of the past, distrustful, even fearful of the man on the other side of the national boundary line, resentful, bitter, impatient; yet at the same time dreaming of a new world order to be created not so much by the slow processes of moral and spiritual convictions as by the short cut of external force. A generation at the same time full of genuine enthusiasm, worshipping a new way of racial and material perfection, a noble idealism that reaches for the stars, yet perverted because it hopes to conquer them by means of high-powered airplanes and long-range guns. Have we Methodists, messengers of peace and good will on earth a mission in this European world of to-day, turbulent, swept by the storms of national and racial hatreds, in this Europe where millions of young men are trained to kill and destroy? We raise this question, not because there is any doubt in our own minds, but because we believe that we owe it to our own constituency as well as to the broad masses of the European people, to give a clear cut answer.

THE TOTALITARIAN CLAIMS OF CHRIST, THE ANSWER OF METHODISM.

Yes, Methodism has an answer. It is Jesus Christ, the Saviour. In our day as well as in the days of the Apostolic Church, the inspired utterance of St. Peter

holds good: «There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved». Jesus Christ even in our day as of old «is the stone which was set at nought by the builders which is become the head of the corner». He is the cornerstone. If he be set at nought, our much vaunted civilization becomes barbarism, mass murder. It has from the beginning been the mission of Methodism to lead men to Christ, to enthrone Him, that is what scriptural holiness means, to enthrone Christ, «that in all things He might have preeminence» (Col. 1, 18). This has ever been the mission of Methodism «to spread scriptural holiness through the lands». And this is more needed in Europe to-day than ever. May Methodism never loose its evangelistic passion. The «strangely warmed heart» must find expression in a strange zeal for winning souls to Christ.

The Methodist stress on conversion — not on a method, but on the substance — means a conscious Christ-centred life. The Methodist insistence of Christian perfection meets the demands of our day and generation. What is Christian perfection? Is it not the recognition of and surrender to the totalitarian claims of Christ? Christ is not satisfied with a compartment in life's dwelling. He wants the whole house. Modern society is increasingly impatient of any form of religion or civilization that touches only one or two spheres of the complex human life, be it individual or social. It demands a program that comprises the whole of life.

Methodism is called by God to meet this demand. While starting with individual surrender to Christ, it does not stop with the individual. In this respect Methodism, from the beginning, has been different from Mysticism or Pietism in any of its forms. The life of God in the soul of man, as Wesley defined in a well-known phrase, the essence of Methodism does not consist in mystical contemplation or in individualistic emo-

tions. It is an active principle. God's love to mankind is tremendously active, dynamic. Nor is the life of God in the soul of man merely individualistic, hence exclusive. It is social, inclusive. It includes the whole world, both extensively: «God so loved the world» and also intensively: «His Kingdom come, His will be done on earth as it is being done in heaven». It has been well said in a recent book on Methodism «The Highroads of Methodism» that «One of the greatest glories of Methodism has been its attitude towards all races and colors of mankind. Its activities in all its history have not been restricted to peoples of one color or tongue. These people called Methodists speak over two hundred tongues but only one language». The individual Gospel as stressed by Methodism necessarily has a social implication. Neither any purely «individual gospel» nor what is called «social gospel» is complete without the other. When isolated neither of them does justice the totalitarian claims of Christ, nor meets the needs and demands of the modern world. Hence those Methodists whose hearts were strangely warmed ever since the days of John Wesley have industriously ministered to the physical, intellectual and social needs of the people. The Methodist Church has a social creed, which has been confirmed by the Uniting Conference. In the preamble to this creed we find the following statement: «The Methodist Church aims to view the perplexing times and problemes which we face to-day in the light of the teaching of Jesus». Then follow eighteen paragraphs, enumerating the most blatant evils in combating which the Methodist Church is laboring to bring the whole of life with its activities, possessions and relationships into conformity with the will of God. The Methodists are persuaded that no mere human efforts can create a new world. But they are equally persuaded that the Church is the body of Christ through which Christ works out His plans; that the re-

generated, spirit filled members of His body are fellow-workers with the exalted Head in the great work of redeeming this world.

Our task is to use every opportunity to do good to the souls and bodies of our fellow men, to do whatever lies in us to enthrone Christ, not only to pray but to work that His will be done on earth, in the sure trust and joyous expectation, that in His time He will bring the «work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope» of his faithful co-workers to its glorious consummation in this world, to which he came down in order to redeem it. And to Him shall be honor and glory.

OUR PLEDGE.

It was a memorable, never to be forgotten moment, when at the close of the Uniting Conference the nine hundred delegates together with the fifty bishops rose and with uplifted hands pledged their loyalty to the new Methodist Church. May we call upon you, the representatives of the new Methodist Church in Europe to consecrate yourselves anew to Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Master and to pledge your unreserved loyalty to Him and to the branch of His Church to which we belong, our beloved Methodist Church. «And to Him, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh *in us*, unto Him be glory in the Church in Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end».

John L. Nuelsen.
Arthur J. Moore.
Raymond J. Wade.
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